World Bank Assistance to GAIL

*240. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether World Bank has offered its assistance to GAIL (India) in financing and consultancy, development of gas pipe network in India and also use of gas in agriculture sector as well as rural areas;

(b) if so, whether in addition to this, World Bank also has agreed to assist in development of strategies for improving the domestic gas production and also carrying out studies on efficient use of natural gas in different sectors;

(c) if so, whether GAIL has accepted the offer; and

(d) if so, by when the work on these projects are likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MULI DEORA): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of the reply to (a) and (b) above.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Hike in airfare of Gulf Sector

1484. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the national carriers used to hike the airfare of Gulf countries during peak seasons *viz.* vacation and other festival seasons;

(b) if so, the reasons for the same;

(c) whether steps will be taken to withdraw such hike in airfare by the national carriers; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Both Air India and Indian airlines are commercial organizations and respond to market requirements depending upon competition, demand supply, seasonality, frequency, timings, direct/

indirect operations, etc. The airlines adjust their fares to meet such dynamic market requirements. Further, in order to maintain normal schedule during lean season, fares are revised during high season in order to sustain the operations through out the year.

Air India has also launched its Low Cost Carrier Air India Express in April, 2005 with a view to provide economic and safe travel to people who are employed in the Gulf with modest salaries.

Eco-Tourism Circuit

†1485. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have granted approval to eco-tourism circuit (Amarkantak-Achanakmar, Ratanpur, Kendai, Ramgarh, Maheshpur, Ambikapur, Manpat, Kailashgufa, Bagicha, Pandarapath, Sanna, Jashpurnagar) in Chhattisgarh;

(b) If so, the date since when the proposal has been approved alongwith the funds sanctioned therefor;

(c) the amount released by Government for this purpose during the year 2005-06 and 2006-07; and

(d) the details of the progress made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned the Eco-tourism circuit in Chattisgarh with central financial assistance of Rs. 648.35 lakhs on 16.12.2004. The first instalment of Rs. 518.68 lakh, being 80% of the sanctioned CFA has been released. As per guidelines, the balance amount is released to the State Governments\UT Administrations only after submission of utilization certificate, completion/commissioning certificate, management agreement and undertaking by them.

(d) Execution, implementation and maintenance/management of the project proposals sanctioned under various schemes of the Ministry of Tourism is the responsibility of the State Government concerned. However, Ministry of Tourism regularly monitors the progress of projects sanctioned under Central Financial Assistance.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.